



The Public Library of New London received its start in 1876, with a bequest from successful New London whaling, sealing and shipping merchant, Henry P. Haven. Mr. Haven's \$65,000 gift was instrumental in the construction of the original 4,000 square foot library building, and initiating a book collection which was opened to the public in July, 1891.

The building design was executed by the firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge of Boston from the original plans of the well-known architect Henry Hobson Richardson.

The original building is in the Romanesque design and is constructed of pink granite from Worcester. This granite structure also has Kibbe sandstone trimmings.

The building is a parallelogram in shape and is 40 feet by 90 feet with a gable covering the porch, which is entered by three arches from Hunting Street and one from State Street. The ceiling of the porch is formed of three groined vaults, which add to its stability.

At the peak of the porch's roof is a tympanum of stone on which is carved the coat of arms of the City of New London – a ship under full sail.

Inserted in a panel near an entrance to the library there is a bronze relief of Henry P. Haven, executed by the sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens, whose statues of famous men are in several parks in the United States.

The main room contains a carved stone fireplace and well-rubbed, quartered oak paneling. The paneling of oak runs around the room at the height of 13 feet and the ceiling is also paneled between the heavy oak beams.

In 1974, the library added a modern 15,000 square foot building at the existing site. Further renovations to create more space for increased collections needs and administrative offices were concluded as of March 2001. Renovations to the Children's area and the meeting rooms were made in 2006.

